

THE THREE STRINGS

By NATALIE SUMNER LINCOLN
Author of "The Nameless Man"

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READ THIS FIRST

Evelyn Preston finds the body of a stranger in the library of her home in Washington and her mother and her stepfather, Peter Burnham, appear as mystified as she is. The man died of prussic acid. Captain La Montagne, in love with Evelyn, learns that his letters to her have been intercepted and blames Burnham. Burnham is slightly wounded by a bullet and blames La Montagne. Mrs. Ward, the housekeeper in the Burnham home, has acted peculiarly since the discovery of the body. Evelyn sees her go into the library and follows her. Just as the girl bends to see if the key is in the lock, the door is pulled open and she falls into the arms of her stepfather.

THEN READ THIS

ON SUDDEN impulse Evelyn stooped over to see if by chance a key was in the lock on the other side of the door. Before she secured a good look at the hole the door was jerked open and Evelyn precipitated into the arms of her stepfather.

Peter Burnham regarded her in silent indignation as she recovered her balance and released her hold of his arm which she had instinctively clung to for support.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded and his voice betrayed his excitement.

"I was trying to see if the door was locked on the inside," Evelyn was a trifle breathless as well as consumed with inward fury at having been caught in so ignominious a position by her stepfather. "I had no idea you were in the room."

"Oh, you hadn't," Burnham shoved his hands deep in the pockets of his dressing gown. "Well, if you must know, I came in to find out what you were doing in here. Don't deny you were here," as she started to speak. "I heard you from my bedroom and came in to investigate."

"You did not hear me," Evelyn retorted. "Mrs. Ward was in here."

"Mrs. Ward!" Burnham turned and gazed uneasily about the room, and back at Evelyn. "What was she doing here?"

"She said she came in to straighten the room," Evelyn paused in her contemplation of Burnham and also glanced about the room. Mrs. Ward had evidently arranged the shades and curtains so as to darken the library, and Evelyn, her eyes accustomed to the sunlit hall, made out the familiar objects with some difficulty. "I hope Mrs. Ward did not dust," she added as Burnham kept silent. "Detective Mitchell expressly stated we were not to dust in here."

"And pray where have you seen Mitchell?" asked Burnham quickly.

"Here," meeting his irate gaze calmly. "The detective spends a great deal of time in and about the house. Don't you think you had better go back to bed?"

Burnham muttered something she did not catch. "Have you seen that jackass, Jones?" he asked in a louder key.

"Yes, he is looking for mother," Evelyn's eyes were growing more used to the light and she saw that a drawer of the desk table was opened, and an overturned scrap-basket lay on the floor near at hand. "Why did you lock the library door?"

"To prevent intrusions," replied Burnham shortly. "The police have ordered this room closed; very well, it shall remain closed. Please notify Mrs. Ward to that effect, and also kindly tell Jones to bring me my clothes. I'll—" a coughing spell interrupted him. "Tell Jones I'll discharge him if he doesn't," he added as soon as he could speak. "Also ask him if he sent that telephone for Doctor Hayden."

"I heard him do that," volunteered Evelyn. "The doctor said he would be in after his morning office hours were over."

"Oh, all right," Burnham moved to the desk and picked up a pencil sharpener from among the brass ornaments lying about. "Hurry, Evelyn, and send Jones to my room with my clothes."

But Evelyn did not start at once on her errand; there was a feverish anxiety about Burnham which puzzled her. His explanation of his presence in the room was plausible; it was a natural impulse to look in the library if he heard any one moving about in the room closed by order of the coroner, and perfectly proper to lock the door to prevent others entering. But why had he not looked into the hall on first entering the library to see who had left the room? Why wait nearly five minutes, for that time at least had elapsed while she, Evelyn, had engaged the housekeeper in conversation, before jerking open the door? And why select the moment when she and not Mrs. Ward was standing before it? Come to think of it, she had rattled the knob in trying to open the door; of course, that would attract Burnham's attention and cause him to find out who was trying to enter. Satisfied with the sudden solution which had occurred to her, Evelyn woke up to the fact that Burnham was thumping nervously on the door which he held invitingly open.

"Hurry, hurry," he reiterated, and Evelyn sped out of the room.

Burnham waited a moment after closing the hall door and locking it securely, then taking out his bunch of keys he slipped the key on its silver ring and dropped them back in his pocket. Next he hurried over to the desk and gathered some papers from the drawer, closed it, picked up the scrap basket and placed it under the desk, and taking a pocket chess board from the table he returned to his bedroom through the communicating door, closing it carefully behind him. After pulling up the shades and pushing back the curtains and flooding the room with light, he clambered back into bed and commenced reading over the papers he still clutched in his hand. He was absorbed in working out

a difficult chess problem on the pocket board when a rap on his hall door disturbed him.

"Come in, Jones," he called, but instead of his butler, Doctor Hayden walked in. Burnham's worried expression changed to one of relief. "I thought you would never come," he exclaimed, pushing aside the chess diagrams lying on the counterpane. "Draw up a chair and let's talk; don't bother about that thermometer," frowning. "My temperature is normal. I've taken it," pointing to a silver enameled instrument lying on the bed stand.

Hayden smiled as he sat down, having first, however, poured out a glass of water from a carafe on the stand and put his thermometer in the glass of water.

"Amateur diagnosticians make work

you work yourself into these excitements."

"Work myself up!" exclaimed Burnham bitterly. "Nothing of the sort. Do you think a man of my temperament can keep calm after finding a dead man in one of my rooms and being shot at two nights ago—and the murderer still at large? Why, man, my life's in danger any hour, any moment until Rene La Montagne is put under restraint!"

"Oh!" Hayden stroked his chin reflectively. Burnham was certainly working himself into a state of nervous agitation, and the astute physician was wondering how much reliance to place upon his statements. It was very obvious, however, that Burnham was bent on talking to some one, and Hayden decided it was better to

listen.

Mrs. Burnham nor I would permit Evelyn to marry him." Burnham cleared his throat, his voice having grown husky. "Evelyn was expected in Washington and I wanted the Frenchman told before they met."

"Well, did you see La Montagne Monday night?" asked Hayden.

"No, business in Philadelphia upset my plans," Burnham's eyes again shifted from his physician. "I did not reach Washington until Tuesday."

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"You lie!" Evelyn, her eyes blazing with wrath, shook the bed to emphasize her words.

for the physicians," he said good naturedly. "What are your symptoms today, Burnham?"

But Burnham did not smile. "I know what ails me," he retorted doggedly, his eyes shifting about the room and then back at Hayden. "Worry has played the devil with my digestive organs. I'll admit I had a beastly night, but I am all right now. I don't like the baby's food my wife insists on sending up to me, gruel and such stuff. I want a square meal."

"You did!" Hayden stared in astonishment at his patient. "Why did you make an appointment with him if you did not like or trust the man?"

"Because I wanted him to understand, once and for all, that neither

man here on Monday night in mistake for me."

"What!" Hayden regarded Burnham's flushed countenance with keen attention. "Come, come, Burnham, don't talk nonsense; be sensible."

"You can think me cracked if you like," Burnham's jaw protruded obstinately. "Let me tell you something: La Montagne expected to find me here Monday night because I wrote him to meet me here."

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THE LOAN

My friend protected me in youth. My education he provided. He taught me love for honor, truth. At heart we've never been divided. And have I now forgetful grown Because he asks me for a loan?

When danger threatened me he came To my assistance gladly, proudly. I knew his worth and sang his fame Persistently and somewhat loudly. And can I now proclaim him rash Because he needs a little cash?

It cost him money to defeat The enemy that once assailed me. He struggled in the battle's heat. In times of stress he never failed me. I really cannot love him much If I grow chilly at his touch.

So, Uncle Sam, my wad is yours. Just help yourself to what you're needing. As long as Liberty endures Affection's calls we'll all be heeding. The jingle of our coins won't stop Till Victory Loan goes o'er the top.

GRIF ALEXANDER.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

With a reckless courage which few Hun airmen would emulate, the enemy swooped with sinister hum and flash and gaudy coloring toward the commanding officer of the Impetuous Squadron, H. A. P., who failed to notice the swift attack and carried on all unconscious of his danger.

But one of his subalterns had seen the jeopardy in which his leader was placed, and dived to the rescue, gallantly diverting the enemy's attention to himself.

The enemy lost no time in engaging this new assailant, and for a time the thrilling duel raged between the young officer and his foe. It was not until the British airman, less experienced in flight than his antagonist, appeared to be getting out maneuvered that his comrades intervened.

Then followed a wild melee, in the midst of which two of the British pilots, in their anxiety to be "in at the death," collided. But they were soon to be avenged, for the squadron commander, circling warily round the enemy, at last gained a position in which he had him at his mercy; and the enemy hurled to the ground, a shattered wreck.

Then the officers of the Impetuous Squadron laid down the folded newspaper with which they had been swatting the wasp which had invaded their mess.—London Opinion.

DOROTHY DARNIT—The Dog Was Evidently a Poor Matchmaker



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By CHAS. McMANUS

After they had returned to their city home Mrs. Roberts dropped in for one of her weekly calls. Seeing Grace at work attired in a plain gingham, her sleeves rolled up, and humming a tune, she threw up her hands in horror. "Good gracious, child," she wailed, "are you crazy working this way and in such a rig with the income Richard has? Do you want him to despise you?"

Grace laughed. "Despise me, mother dear?" She put her plump arms around her mother's neck and kissed her on both cheeks. "Why, Richard says a lot good enough to eat in this rig. 'Good gracious, child,' he wailed, 'are you crazy working this way and in such a rig with the income Richard has? Do you want him to despise you?'"

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The next complete novelette—The Home Guard.

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES—By Daddy

"THE MIGHTY BRONZE GENIE"

(Peggy and Billy find that Pat's mother is about to lose her home on a mortgage. They wish hard for aid and the Mighty Bronze Genie comes to their assistance.)

RICHES IN THE GROUND

PEGGY, Billy and Pat were amazed at the sight of the Mighty Bronze Genie. They hadn't expected their wish character. They thought genii had lived only in the long ago and in distant Oriental lands.

This Genie was mighty-looking and fearless. His head towered up among the low-hanging branches of the trees, and his body was powerful. His mustache, black as coal, bristled fiercely, but in his eyes was a kindly twinkle that made the children feel that he was a friend.

"Wisherame, wisherame, put me to work and watch the dust fly," roared the Genie. "What's your desire?"

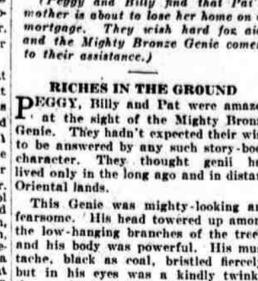
Peggy looked at Billy and Billy looked at Pat. Pat in turn looked at Peggy. None of them knew what to say. Finally Peggy summoned up courage and ventured to answer:

"Well, you see, please good Mr. Mighty Bronze Genie, Misser Jenkins is going to take the farm of Pat's mother on a mortgage."

"Show this Misser Jenkins to me!" roared the Bronze Genie, drawing his glittering scimitar. "One blow and I'll lay his head low."

"Oh, we don't want you to kill him," said Peggy aghast, as the Mighty Bronze Genie swung his scimitar about with murderous fierceness.

"All we want you to do is to raise



"Is he?" exclaimed the Bronze Genie. "We'll see about that!"

the \$600, so he can't take the Widow Clancey's house."

"Raise \$600," howled the Genie. "It might bite to be a lot easier to cut off his head!"

"But that wouldn't be honest," argued Peggy staunchly. "He loaned the Widow Clancey \$600, and she would still owe him \$600 if you cut off his head."

"But what good would \$600 do him if I cut off his head?" asked the Genie. "It might bite to be a lot easier to cut off his head!"

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BRUNO DUKE, Solver of Business Problems

By HAROLD WHITEHEAD, Author of "The Business Career of Peter Flint," etc.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PROFIT-SHARING PLAN

WHEN I wrote up my report on my investigation work at Magnus Brothers I thought I was through. That's where I thought wrong, for when I asked Bruno Duke what my next job should be—he gave me several problems pending—he opened his eyes wide and said:

"Next job? We are not through with this one yet. You'll be back on the job with Magnus Brothers in the morning as usual. Don't you realize, Peter, that although we have something definite to work on you must stay there until the new plan is put into force so that we can know exactly what the workers say about it?"

"All right then; I'll be there in the morning," I must own to being a bit disappointed, for I find it tedious to work hard at a place when I know that I'll not be there long. "Have you any plan worked out yet?"

"Considering that I've had your report less than six hours you would hardly expect me to have one. There are one or two questions I want to ask you first. Tell me, what nationality are the employees?"

"Awfully mixed," I laughed. "George is Scotch-Irish. I'm told that the two Mr. Magnuses claim they are Yorkshire. When asked if they are English they said, 'No we're Yorkshire'—they're good Yankees now, though. The office fellows are Jewish while the shipping men are mostly Irish. The salesmen are—I don't know what they are, but they're a fine lot of fellows."

"You say the office men and the warehouse men don't work well together?"

"I shook my head. "The office men seem suspicious and a bit secretive—although they work well together. The warehouse men are rough and ready, good-natured, but pugnacious."

"H-m," mused Duke, "it looks as if the organization must be treated in three distinct ways. I fear that a uniform plan would not work. One other question, Peter. Have you any idea what the fellows do in their spare time?"

"No, a number go to night school of some sort—I hear some of the desk men talking dashes at times, but I think they are bluffing—they want to make the others feel that they are real regaler fellows."

"What do they think of hardware as a business and how do they feel toward the Magnus Brothers?"

"With few exceptions they like the business. I find that the longer a fellow's been in it the more he likes it. They all think that the two bosses are fine, and while, of course, not agreeing with all they do, they feel that they get a square deal. They hate Harlem, though."

"Are you talking of a town or a person?" quizzed Duke.

"Harlem is the cashier. He's a very short chap, not more than five foot two or five foot three inches. As clever at figures as anybody I ever saw, but my! how that man does hate himself! He's forever telling what wonderful things he does—he brags of his home, his wife—(oh, yes, he's married)—his fowl—(so the commandment has it)—and everything that is his! He sneers at everybody else. He has a bitter, sarcastic tongue and generally tries to make everybody miserable."

"The salesmen hate him because he's always cutting off odd items on their expense accounts. The bookkeepers hate him because he's so mean with supplies—he has charge of all office supplies—and is always making them work overtime to get straight. And George and his gang! They swear he lies awake nights to think up ways of finding fault with the way shipments are sent. He's always harping on 'classification of goods' and such like. Believe me, Mr. Duke, Harlem is some bird."

"Charles Magnus told me of him," remarked Duke; "he says he's their most valuable man and saves them thousands of dollars a year. He keeps everybody on the qui vive to save expenses."

"Shouldn't think it would pay to keep such a grouchy as he is, though," I protested. "Say, Mr. Duke, what's all this

THE DAILY NOVELETTE

BLACKWOODS PHILOSOPHY

By DOROTHY CROWELL

MRS. ROBERT darted furtive glances at her daughter who was idly drumming on the closed window. Finally, unable to stifle her curiosity longer, she burst out, "Grace, stop that silly pounding. What in the world is the matter? Has Richard developed a grouch?"

Grace shrugged her shoulders and sighed. "I hardly see enough of him to know." Something was forming in her mind, of which the mother, despite her superior knowledge of the world, was ignorant.

Mrs. Roberts went to her. "Never mind, Grace. You will find after you have been married as long as I that men are peculiar creatures, and that it is best to let them fight out their grouches alone."

"Oh, it isn't that," Grace declared seriously. "But I can see that gradually I am losing Richard's love. In many ways he shows it."

Mrs. Roberts tried to comfort her daughter, vowing to give Richard a piece of her mind at the first opportunity. Mrs. Roberts was to be farther shocked before the visit was over. The cause of this new worry was her daughter's firm determination to bury herself in the country, and think out the reason for the growing coldness between herself and her husband, and of all places in the world at Grandmother Stetson's away up in the wilderness, miles and miles from everything. Mrs. Roberts threw up her hands in despair as she heard this insane folly of her silly daughter.

Grandmother Stetson, while living in the wilderness, knew human nature with a knowledge that her daughter could never acquire, and when Grace walked dejectedly into the little sitting room of the house in the wilderness, she was met with ready sympathy and folded in two substantial arms.

In a few words, Grace unfolded her grievance, and when she had finished Mrs. Stetson declared with conviction "that it is a mighty poor apology for a woman who cannot keep her husband's love once she has won it."

Within the week Grace had discarded her city frocks for more suitable garments, which her own hands had fashioned under the critical eyes of the

grandmother. Mrs. Stetson took matters into her own hands now, and immediately forwarded a telegram which brought that young man to the house in the wilderness within a day. He burst hastily into the sitting room, "Great Scott!" "Where is she? I never realized Grace was as ill as that. Oh, I knew there was something, but—"

"Grace is not ill," Mrs. Stetson told him. "That telegram is something between myself and my conscience. You wrote a pretty letter about going away for months, and leaving your wife, didn't you?"

"Well a business man has to attend—"

"Hum," Mrs. Stetson sniffed disdainfully. "Go in the kitchen and wash up." She pointed to a door at the end of the short hall, Richard pressed the latch and went in.

The figure bent over the table, rolling pin in hand, he failed to recognize. Alarmed at the heavy tread, the girl looked up. "Dick," she gasped in astonishment. Both were embarrassed, and acted like two children. A formal hand shook hands before the visit was over. "That is horrible," she shuddered and brushed her hand furtively across her eyes. "If I thought that—"

Mrs. Stetson smiled and interrupted, "My goodness, Grace, don't be so tragic, but you just remember this. In spite of all the fool notions these city friends of yours have filled your head with, a spick-and-span gingham apron and the color in your cheeks, I don't mean that kind they advertise, and well-cooked meals will hold a man stronger than any other ties invented by mortal. And here's another thing. It doesn't cost much to give a good smile with it, too. A man will respond to good treatment every time and if he can't get that at some time, then, just tell me where in this vale of woe he can't!"

After they had returned to their city home Mrs. Roberts dropped in for one of her weekly calls. Seeing Grace at work attired in a plain gingham, her sleeves rolled up, and humming a tune, she threw up her hands in horror. "Good gracious, child," she wailed, "are you crazy working this way and in such a rig with the income Richard has? Do you want him to despise you?"

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